

TRIUMPH OF THE ECONOMIC VIRTUES
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Great Governour of the world hath
appointed to every
man his proper post and province, and
let him be
never so active out of his sphere, he will be
at a great
loss, if he do not keep his own vineyard and
mind his
own business."⁷¹

From this reiterated insistence on secular
obligations
as imposed by the divine will, it follows that,
not with-
drawal from the world, but the
conscientious discharge
of the duties of business, is among the
loftiest of religi-
ous and moral virtues. ^u The begging friars
and such
monks as live only to themselves and to their
formal
devotion, but do employ themselves in no
one thing to
further their own subsistence or the good of
mankind *.
yet have the confidence to boast of this
their course
as a state of perfection ; which in very deed,
as to the
worthiness of it, falls short of the poorest
cobbler, for
his is a calling of God, and theirs is none."

^{T7} The
idea was not a new one. Luther had
advanced it as
a weapon against monasticism. But for
Luther, with
his patriarchal outlook on economic affairs,
the calling
means normally that state of life in which the
individual
has been set by Heaven, and against which it
is impiety
to rebel. On the lips of Puritan divines, it is
not an in-
vitation to resignation, but the bugle-call
which summons
the elect to the long battle which will end
only with

their death. " The world is all before
them/¹ They
are to hammer out their salvation, not
merely *in* *voca-*
ti&ne, but *per vocationem*. The calling is not
a condition
in which the individual is born, but a
strenuous and
exacting enterprise, to be undertaken,
indeed, under
the guidance of Providence, but to be
chosen by each
man for himself, with a deep sense of his
solemn re-
sponsibilities. " God hath given to man
reason for
this use, that he should first consider, then
choose, then
put in execution ; and it is a preposterous
and brutish
thing to fix or fall upon any weighty
business, such as a
calling or condition of life, without a careful
pondering
it in the balance of sound reason," ^{7S}